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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventy-second year

Identical letters dated 16 June 2017 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

Throughout the month of June, countries, civil society and individuals around the world have joined in solidarity with the Palestinian people as they solemnly marked 50 years of Israel's occupation of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip since 1967. As we reflect on this sombre anniversary and the devastating impact of this brutal foreign occupation on the Palestinian people and their land, it is beyond regrettable that a political horizon to end this grave, massive injustice remains absent as Israel, the occupying Power, shows no indication or intention of halting its illegal policies and practices, and on the contrary only persists with its entrenchment of the occupation and its subjugation of the Palestinian civilian population.

While Israel's impunity and intransigence continue to douse hopes for a peaceful solution, eroding every single day the prospects of achieving the two-State solution on the 1967 lines, it also continues to propel the deterioration of the situation on the ground and to compound the never-ending list of countless human rights violations, including war crimes, against the Palestinian people. Since our previous letter regarding the situation in Occupied Palestine, including East Jerusalem, the criminal actions by Israeli occupying forces have continued, no doubt bolstered by this culture of impunity and lawlessness insisted on by the Israeli Government, even in times of peace process, and the global failure to hold Israel accountable for any of its violations against the Palestinian people for over a half-century.

As with its constant oppression of the Palestinian people, the occupying Power has been unrelenting in its colonial settlement enterprise, whether announcing "intentions" to build or actually building more Israeli settlements on occupied Palestinian land, in grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention and a war crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. The signs are blatant and innumerable that the Israeli Government has no intention whatsoever of ceasing its settlement activities — despite the unequivocal demand by the Security Council in resolution 2334 (2016) for a complete and immediate cessation of all settlement

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activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem — and no intention to foster the conditions necessary to open a political horizon to salvage the two-State solution.

In this regard, Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu declared the previous week, "Alongside our desire to reach an agreement with our Palestinian neighbours, we will continue to protect the settlement enterprise and strengthen it." He went on to state, "We are doing this responsibly and with discretion." One does not need to read between the lines to know that Israel constantly contradicts itself with such statements, as with its illegal policies and practices, since settlements will clearly never lead to peace. On the contrary, such illegal and destructive practices are the main obstacle to achieving a peaceful settlement and constitute the biggest threat to the two-State solution. There is no such thing as "responsible" settlement building, and any attempt to legalize the illegal must never be tolerated and must be roundly condemned.

At the same time, since our previous letter, Israel, the occupying Power has persisted with all other human rights violations against the Palestinian people, including its arrest and detention raids throughout the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Palestinian civilians continue to be detained daily, with young men and boys fiercely targeted by the Israeli occupying forces, who routinely assault, humiliate and abuse Palestinian civilians that they have arbitrarily arrested or detained.

In this connection, it is also necessary to draw your attention to the dire health conditions of many of the prisoners who participated in the 40-day hunger strike that ended on 27 May and was initiated to highlight the critical plight of the over 6,500 Palestinian prisoners and detainees being held by the occupying Power and to appeal for respect for their basic human rights. It should be recalled that Israel responded to this peaceful, non-violent protest with harsh punitive measures, adding to their suffering. Many of the hunger strikers continue to suffer serious health consequences, including physical deterioration such as brain damage and vision problems. We thus urgently call for attention to be given to any Palestinian prisoner in need of medical assistance. At the same time, we continue to call for an end to all types of abuse and to inhumane treatment of Palestinians in Israeli captivity, while also reiterating our calls for the release of all Palestinian prisoners and detainees.

In addition to the above, the Palestinian people living in the Gaza Strip continue to suffer tremendously from the dire humanitarian crisis caused by Israel's suffocating and immoral decade-long blockade, an act of gross collective punishment. Moreover, the occupying forces continue to attack Palestinians living there, including the killing of Ayed Khamis Jumaa (age 35), who was shot in the head with live ammunition during clashes between Palestinian civilians and Israeli forces in northern Gaza. Six other Palestinians were also injured by Israeli fire. Israeli occupying forces also continue to fire at Palestinian fishermen off the coast of the Gaza Strip, endangering their lives and placing them in a constant state of fear.

As all of this is happening, unabated and with grave impact on the Palestinian people and their hopes for an end to this injustice, Israel also continues its hostile attempts to silence anybody who reveals the truth about this abhorrent situation. One most recent example is the call by Israel to the United Nations to terminate the tenure of the Humanitarian Coordinator of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Robert Piper, or else threatening to revoke his residency permit. The cause of such punitive threats? Clearly it is in response to Mr. Piper faithfully carrying out his duties and reporting honestly on what he is witnessing on the ground. This type of arrogant behaviour has become a characteristic of Israeli policy, which is to threaten and intimidate anyone who dares speak the facts and the truth about the illegal and inhumane policies and practices of its brutal occupation, and it must not be tolerated.

After more than 50 years of occupation and nearly 70 years since Al-Nakba, we will not relent in our calls and efforts for international law to be upheld and the relevant resolutions to be implemented towards the realization of justice and the fulfilment of the Palestinian people's inalienable rights and legitimate national aspirations, including to independence in their State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, and the attainment of a comprehensive and lasting peace, which we have for so long sought and which is so urgently needed for both regional and international peace and security. These objectives have become more urgent, not less, with the passage of decades and accumulation of crimes perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people, and we call upon the international community to finally commit itself to bringing an end to the occupation and this injustice. Condemning 50 years of settlements, 50 years of war crimes, 50 years of occupation is no longer enough. It is time for genuine and concerted action.

Before concluding, below we share just some of the many crimes perpetrated by the occupying Power in the period since our previous letter to you:

26 May 2017

- Israeli occupying forces detained at least seven Palestinians and sealed a supermarket during multiple raids across the West Bank.
- A group of Israeli settlers attacked Palestinian commercial shops under the protection of occupying forces in central Al-Khalil (Hebron).

29 May 2017

- Occupying forces detained at least 18 Palestinians, mostly in overnight raids across the West Bank.

30 May 2017

- Israeli occupying forces opened fire at a Palestinian man (age 25) as he was walking near the beach in the northern Gaza Strip, injuring him.

2 June 2017

- Israeli occupying forces detained four Palestinian youths in Janin and Qalqilyah.
- A Palestinian girl, Nouf Infi'at (age 16), succumbed to wounds she sustained on 1 June after being shot by Israeli forces in Ya'bad, south of Janin.

3 June 2017

- Israeli navy occupying forces opened fire at Palestinian fishing boats off the Gaza coast.

4 June 2017

- Occupying forces destroyed eight coal production facilities and confiscated hundreds of tons of wood used for manufacturing charcoal, outside the town of Ya'bad.

7 June 2017

- Israeli settlers set up 13 tents and caravans on Palestinian privately owned land near the village of Dayr Istiya, near the town of Salfit.

- Occupying forces assaulted two Palestinians and seized a tractor in Qusrah village, south of Nablus.

8 June 2017

- Occupying forces detained at least 11 Palestinians across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.

9 June 2017

- Israeli settlers vandalized several Palestinian-owned cars in Bayt Safafa, south of East Jerusalem.
- Israeli occupying forces shot dead Ayed Khamis Jumaa (age 35) and injured at least six other persons in the Gaza Strip.

11 June 2017

- Israeli occupying forces detained 14 Palestinians during overnight and early raids across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.
- Israeli occupying forces opened fire, attacking Palestinian farmers and fishermen in the Gaza Strip.

12 June 2017

- Israeli occupying forces detained at least 15 Palestinians during overnight raids across the West Bank, including East Jerusalem.
- Israeli occupying forces served military orders to a Palestinian family informing it of the occupation's intentions to demolish their home in the Nuway'imah area, north of Jericho, citing bogus pretexts such as "building without a permit".

This letter is in follow-up to our 613 previous letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 24 May 2017 (A/ES-10/754-S/2017/447), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations